

Message Text

SECRET

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ORIGIN NODS-00

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DRAFTED BY NEA:ARLAY:TH

APPROVED BY THE SECRETARY

NEA:ALATHERTON, JR.

P:PHABIB

S/S:MR. BRIDGES

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 176288

NODIS

FOR AMBASSADOR FROM THE SECRETARY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AEMR, US, LE

SUBJECT: EVACUATION FROM LEBANON

REF: CAIRO 9600

1. YOU SHOULD CONVEY TO FAHMY THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE FROM ME.

2. BEGIN TEXT: HERMANN EILTS HAS REPORTED TO ME HIS CONVERSATION WITH YOU. I VERY MUCH APPRECIATED YOUR READY RESPONSE TO OUR REQUEST THAT THE PLO BE CONTACTED CONCERNING OUR PROPOSED EVACUATION.

I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS, AS HERMANN HAS DONE, THAT THE REDUCTION IN OUR EMBASSY STAFF AND THE EVACUATION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO WISH TO LEAVE IS MOTIVATED ON OUR

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PART ENTIRELY BY THE CURRENT CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN BEIRUT

AND NOT BY ANY INFORMATION OR SUPPOSITION ABOUT FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. THIS WAS ALSO VERY MUCH THE EMPHASIS IN PRINCE FAHD'S COMMENT TO US. IN OUR ANNOUNCEMENT WE MAKE CLEAR THAT THE RISKS AND DIFFICULTIES OF OPERATING IN BEIRUT HAVE LED US TO REDUCE THE EMBASSY STAFF AND ELIMINATE THE MAJORITY OF EMBASSY FUNCTIONS. WE POINT OUT THAT, IN THE

CIRCUMSTANCES, THE EMBASSY WILL NO LONGER HAVE THE CAPABILITY EFFECTIVELY TO PROVIDE SERVICES FOR THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS CIRCUMSTANCE, WE ARE URGING PRIVATE AMERICAN CITIZENS TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY. MOST OTHER EMBASSIES IN BEIRUT HAVE ALREADY REDUCED THEIR STAFFS SHARPLY, AND SOME HAVE CLOSED COMPLETELY. WE STILL HAVE 37 OFFICIAL AMERICANS IN OUR EMBASSY, WHICH IS MANY MORE THAN WE NEED, GIVEN PRESENT LIVING CONDITIONS AND RESTRICTIONS ON MOVEMENT. BUT WE WILL STILL HAVE A FUNCTIONING EMBASSY OF 10 TO 15 PEOPLE.

I CAN SPECIFICALLY ASSURE YOU THAT WE HAVE NO INFORMATION ABOUT A PLANNED ISRAELI MOVE INTO LEBANON OR ABOUT ANY CHRISTIAN OR SYRIAN INTENTION TO ESCALATE THE CONFLICT. WE NOW HAVE NO CONTACT WITH THE CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP IN LEBANON, SINCE IT IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR OUR OFFICIALS TO TRAVEL ACROSS TO EAST BEIRUT AND JOUNIE AND TELEPHONE SERVICE HAS VIRTUALLY CEASED. WE HAVE SIMILARLY HAD LITTLE CONTACT WITH THE SYRIANS ABOUT THE LEBANESE SITUATION, AND THEY HAVE GIVEN US NO STATEMENT OF THEIR INTENTIONS. WHILE WE DO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE ISRAELIS FROM TIME TO TIME, EVERYTHING THEY HAVE TOLD US WOULD INDICATE AN ABSENCE OF ANY INTENTION ON THEIR PART TO MOVE INTO SOUTHERN LEBANON.

I WOULD ASK YOU IN ANY CASE NOT TO GIVE UNDUE IMPORTANCE TO THIS EVACUATION MOVE. IT SIMPLY REPRESENTS ANOTHER CUTTING BACK OF THE EMBASSY AND ANOTHER EFFORT TO ARRANGE DEPARTURE FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS WHO MAY WISH TO LEAVE. IT CERTAINLY DOES NOT REFLECT A LESSENING OF OUR INTEREST IN THE COUNTRY OR OF OUR HOPE THAT A CEASEFIRE AND PEACEFUL POLITICAL SOLUTION CAN BE FOUND.

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WE WILL LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU WHEN YOU HAVE HAD WORD FROM THE PLO, OR IF YOU HAVE ANY FURTHER COMMENT ON OUR PLANS. END TEXT.

3. YOU SHOULD, ONCE YOU HAVE COMMUNICATED THIS MESSAGE, READ TO FAHMY THE FOLLOWING PORTIONS OF JIDDA'S 4855, REPORTING FAHD'S RECOMMENDATION THAT WE EVACUATE BEIRUT:

QUOTE I URGE YOU TO EVACUATE EVERYBODY WHILE IT CAN BE
DONE. END QUOTE. QUOTE IF YOU WAIT TOO LONG, FAHD
DECLARED, YOU WILL HAVE TO USE FORCE AND YOU WILL BE
CRITICIZED FOR YOUR ACTION. ONE GROUP OR ANOTHER WILL
ACCUSE YOU OF INTERVENING FOR THIS OR THAT REASON. THE
SOONER YOU ACT THE BETTER HE SAID. HE SAID LEBANON HAD
BECOME A NO-MAN'S LAND WHERE IT WAS DANGEROUS EVEN TO
SEEK OUT THOSE WITH WHOM ONE MIGHT TALK. I ASKED HIM
WHAT HE WAS DOING ABOUT SAUDI NATIONALS. HE REPLIED THAT

AFTER SEVERAL SLEEPLESS NIGHTS HE HAD ORDERED EVERYBODY
OUT, DIPLOMATS, MILITARY ATTACHES AND ALL OTHER SAUDIS.
HE USED THE PLANES CARRYING IN MEDICAL SUPPLIES TO RETURN
THEM TO SAUDI ARABIA. WHAT COULD THEY DO IN LEBANON, HE
ASKED, EXCEPT RISK THEIR LIVES? THERE IS NO ONE TO TALK
TO OR TO SEE FOR ANY USEFUL PURPOSE. END QUOTE.

KISSINGER

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NNN

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